

beauty

BODY BUFF

A combination of exfoliation and vichy hydrotherapy turns skin from dry and itchy to winter-ready.

by mary o'regan

Every year around this time, my skin starts to itch. It begins in November and by mid-January I'm buying giant bottles of lotion and wishing there were a way for me to live inside a Cetaphil tub. This is, of course, all Minnesota's fault, with its ultra-humid summers and bone-dry winters. But aside from yelling at the sky and collecting lotion samples, there isn't much a girl can do to stop the itchiness. Or so I thought.

I wasn't sure what to expect when I made my appointment for a "Glow Body Polish" (\$80) at Bella on the Bay Salon Spa in Excelsior. I knew it involved buffing away dead skin cells and vichy hydrotherapy, a massage using high-pressure water jets. The whole thing sounded like a human car wash.

Located on the second floor of a beautiful converted Victorian house up the road from Lake Minnetonka, the spa at Bella on the Bay is small and cozy with comfy couches, warm robes and a private steam room that perfectly accommodates one person. Vichy treatments happen in a special tiled room outfitted with hoses, pipes and nozzles.



Bella on the Bay's vichy room. It's pronounced "vee-shee," and it'll make you drool.

As I lay facedown on a massage table, therapist Ellis Miller began gently brushing my skin with a fine-bristled brush—an itchy person's dream. Then she massaged my entire body with an exfoliating salt scrub, sloughing off dead skin to reveal a soft under-layer.

Next came the water. Miller took a high-pressure hose and rinsed off the salt scrub, then turned on a line of nozzles on the ceiling, creating a rainstorm on my back. As thousands of warm droplets pummeled my

back, she gave me a deep-conditioning scalp massage, and I started drooling like one of Pavlov's dogs.

The grand finale was a powerful laser-like jet of water that Miller steered across my back and down my legs, massaging my muscles as the rain continued to pour. Afterward, she balanced things out with a cool mist of water, then rubbed my skin with a silky body cream.

I slept like a rock that night, and the next day my skin felt baby-soft. Better yet, I'm nowhere near as itchy as I was before. It may be January, but according to my skin, we have just entered June—and I have an early summer glow to prove it.



Scrub 'n' Rinse

These Twin Cities spas are some of the few in Minnesota to offer both body treatments and vichy showers.

BELLA ON THE BAY
474 Second St., Excelsior
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IVY SPA CLUB
201 Eleventh St. S., Mpls.
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